

Cinema and Society Across Cultures: Fall Semester, Akos Östör, 2011
aostor@wesleyan.edu

Films from around the globe have captured our attention as compelling glimpses of other worlds. Masterworks of cinema, they are firmly anchored in their own societies and histories, yet they have a universal appeal. Are films from distant lands and times windows to other cultures? What is the relation between cinema and society? Can film esthetics (style and form) engage with anthropological knowledge to deliver the viewer cross-cultural understanding?

Taking key films from East Europe, West Africa, South Asia, and Australia (regions where the instructor has extensive first hand experience) we shall study film production and consumption, social structure and cultural meaning, film esthetics and critical knowledge, and the possibilities for intercultural understanding.

Films of Miklos Jancso, Marta Meszaros, Drijbil Mambety, Osmanu Sembene, Suleiman Cisse, Satyajit Ray, Aparna Sen, Rachel Perkins, and Tracy Moffat will be screened.

Sept 14 Ashes and Diamonds (Wajda)

Sept 21 The Roundup (Jancso)

Sept 28 The Firemen's Ball (Forman)

Oct 5 Diary for my Children (Meszaros)

Oct 12 Yeelen (Cisse)

Oct 19 Xala (Sembene)

Oct 26 Hyenas (Mambety)

Nov 2 Charulata (Ray)

Nov 9 The Adversary (Ray)

Nov 16 To be announced

(Nov 23 Thanksgiving week)

Nov 30 BeDevil (Moffat)

Dec 7 One Night the Moon (Perkins)

1 page discussion paper due every week, one 4-5 page paper due mid-term, and one 8-10 page paper due exam week (c. 220 words per page)

Films will be placed on reserve at The Olin Library after the date of screening.

Sept 14 The Rise of Communist Regimes: Ashes and Diamonds

Iordanova, Cinema of the Other Europe ch 1 (on Google books); Michalek, The Cinema of Moral Concern, ch ; Liehm & Liehm, The Most Important Art, parts iii & iv (Poland)); Ash, "The Uses of Adversity"; Michalek and Turaj, The Modern Cinema of Poland, ch 2

Sept 21 After the Revolution: The Roundup

Iordanova chs 2-3 (Google Books), and pp 68-74; Liehm & Liehm part ii (Hungary); Graham Petrie, History Must Answer to Man, ch 2; Okey, Eastern Europe 1740-1985, chs 3-4; Petrie in ed Paul, Politics Art and Commitment; Ash, "Hungarian Lesson"

Sept 28 The Prague Spring: The Fireman's Ball

Hames, The Czech New Wave, chs 1 & 4; Liehm & Liehm, parts iii & iv (Czechoslovakia); Daniel in ed. Paul, "The Czech Difference"; Ash, "Czechoslovakia under the Ice", "Prague Advertisement"

Oct 5 The Beginning of the End: Diary for My Children

Iordanova ch 6; Portugues, The Cinema of Marta Meszaros; Liehm & Liehm parts iii-iv (Hungary) Ash, "Hungarian Lesson", Hofer, "Construction of Folk Cultural Heritage in Hungary"

Oct 12 Elites and Independence: Xala

Givanni (ed.) Symbolic Narratives / African Cinema pp 183-94; Sembene, "Man is Culture"; Interviews with Sembene; Pfaff, Martin on Sembene; Turvey on Xala; Pfaff, "The Africanness of Sembene's Film Language"; Davidson, "Thinking about Africa", "Nationalism..."

Oct 19 Back to the Source: Yeelen

Pfaff on Cisse; Gentile, "In the Midst of Secrets"; MacRae, "A Political Fable"; Diawara, "Light on Africa"; Gabriel :Third Cinema"; Boughedir, "African Cinema & Ideology"; Appiah, "Arts of Africa"

Oct 26 Predicaments of Culture: Hyenas

Diawara, "The Iconography of African Cinema"; Porton, "Mambety's Hyenas"; Ukadike, "Hyena's Last Laugh"; Tomaselli et.al. "...a Theory of Orality"; Gabriel, "Third Cinema...", and "...Critical Theory"; Rayfield, "Hyenas..."

Nov 2 Colonial Encounters: Charulata

Ganguly, Satyajit Ray: In Search of the Modern, ch 3; Cooper, The Cinema of Satyajit Ray, pp1-14; Kasbekar, "Hidden Pleasures"; Gokulsingh, "...Popular Indian Cinema"; Ray, "What is Wrong with Indian Films"

Nov 9 Protest and Rebellion: The Adversary

Cooper on The Adversary, pp134-43; Tambiah, "Routinization of Violence"; Corbridge and Harris, "Elite Revolts"; Fruzzetti & Perez, "Gender of the Nation"; Roy, "Figuring Mother India"; Ray, "Problems of a Bengal Film Maker"

Nov 16 To be Announced

Nov 23 Thanksgiving week

Nov 30 Accomodation or Difference: BeDevil

Collins and Davis, Australian Cinema After Mabo, pp 3-13; Ward, "Foreword", "Legend and Task"; Hodge & Mishra, "Return of the Repressed"; Ginsberg, "Indigenous Media"; Craven, "Towards the Millenium"

Dec 7 Living Together: One Night the Moon

Collins & Davis, pp126-9, 139-44; Hodge & Mishra, "The Bastard Complex"; Kramer, "Media, Society, Culture"; Meggitt, "Understanding Aboriginal Culture"; Myer, "Representing Culture"

All readings will be available on e-reserves at The Olin Library and/or online.

Additional readings will be suggested for particular assignments in keeping with students' interest.